

VZCZCXRO4534  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHJA #1495/01 2190754  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 060754Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9717  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5269  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2865  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1143  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1176  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2321  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4790  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2918  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2078  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2859  
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH 1014  
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001495

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, S/CT  
NSC FOR E. PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/06/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: JI CO-FOUNDER RESIGNS FROM HARDLINE GROUP

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir--the co-founder of the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah--recently resigned as leader of a hardline group citing ideological differences. Sources believe that Bashir was unhappy over efforts to make the group more democratic, something that conflicted with his support for rigid, hierarchical control. It is difficult to know exactly what is going on in extremist ranks. That said, Bashir's move seems to be a blow to Indonesia's small band of extremists, who are already under pressure due to the GOI's effective anti-terrorist, anti-militant measures. END SUMMARY.

BASHIR RESIGNS FROM GROUP

12. (C) There is tension in the ranks of Muslim extremists, a fringe group in Indonesia. JI-co-founder and spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir, who is also a Muslim cleric, signed a statement on July 19 withdrawing from Majelis Mujahideen Indonesia (MMI) ("Council of Indonesian Jihad Fighters") citing ideological differences. MMI is the political wing of JI.

13. (C) In his statement, Bashir said that despite the institution's commitment to the Islamic struggle, MMI had been implementing a style of leadership that was "un-Islamic." He said he maintained ideological differences with the organization even after being appointed the "Amir Mujahidin" (Leader of the Jihad Fighters). He claimed he was pressured to take up the leadership role and had hoped to "improve the shortcomings" of MMI. The resignation letter also said he was unable to make those improvements due to his imprisonment by "the enemies of God." "I have tried to persuade MMI members to go back to the leadership that is Islam, only to be rejected by some members of MMI," he said. (Note: Bashir was arrested for conspiracy in 2002 in connection with the Bali bombings. He was sentenced to 30 months of prison in 2005 and released in June 2006.)

SPLIT BREWING FOR SOME TIME

14. (C) Sidney Jones, Senior Advisor for the International Crisis Group, told Poloff that the split originated with

MMI's Executive Committee Chair Irfan Awwas and has been brewing for some time. (Note: Awwas is Abu Jibril's brother. Jibril is a MMI leader.) As such, Bashir and his son have been focusing their efforts on the Bashir Center located near Solo in Central Java. According to Jones, Abu Fida of JI in East Java is the director of the center. She also said Bashir has been courted recently by the mainstream Islamic Crescent Moon Party (PBB) and works closely with the party's Solo branch, but is unlikely to join its ranks.

15. (C) A source with close contacts to the MMI leadership told DepPol/C that Bashir resigned due to differences with Awwas and the younger MMI leadership. They wanted to make MMI more open and democratic and to decide MMI policy through a board, rather than have Bashir make all decisions. This faction also wanted to move MMI more into the democratic mainstream, including using elections to expand its reach, the source told us. Bashir, on the other hand, wanted to maintain tight hierarchical control over MMI and its uncompromising commitment to Wahabiism. The source noted that he had recently spoke with Bashir directly about the dispute over the telephone.

#### A BLOW TO EXTREMIST UNITY

16. (C) It is difficult to know exactly what is going on in extremist ranks. That said, Bashir's move seems to be a blow to Indonesia's small band of extremists, who are already under pressure due to the GOI's effective anti-terrorist, anti-militant measures. With the resignation of Bashir from

JAKARTA 00001495 002 OF 002

MMI, the organization loses a very vocal and prominent spokesperson. At the same time, Bashir loses a key platform, Interestingly, despite word of the split, Bashir reportedly plans to attend at least part of MMI's annual convention, which will be held in Yogyakarta later this week.

HUME